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THE OPEN DOOR

BY FREDERICK McCORMICK,
New York.

At the beginning of this century the attention of world men, by which I mean those who think in terms of nations not of pockets like the provincial, was called to the fact that as to nations, the future is to the Russians and to the Chinese. Of the two the advantages seem to favor the Chinese because of their moral solidarity, civilization, competence, and industry, which no internal or external disorder has ever been able to break down, and their extensive natural resources. The Russians hold these views, and the directors of Russia's destiny are guided by them as a vague and impressive fear.

Of the present great political doctrines of the world the foremost are the Monroe Doctrine, and the Open Door. Both are American. Unless America repudiates her place and responsibilities in the world at large, these two doctrines will dominate the politics and progress of this century, because they concern the undeveloped industrial regions of greatest potential wealth and power, and toward which mankind is turned.

Of these two doctrines the foremost is the Open Door, whose importance has been great enough to have dominated the first decade of the century. Here are a few of its influences: its principles caused the most extensive military pilgrimages of modern times—those to Peking in 1900—and a few years later were the avowed cause on Japan's part of what was in some ways the greatest war of civilization, the Russo-Japanese War. Besides causing all the wars of the decade (Open Door Decade) it became the bone of contention, dividing the great powers of the world into two strong groups, one under the leadership of Japan, the other under that of America, whose interests are apparently irreconcilable, and in this way it has created foreign affairs in their largest sense for the United States. And finally the war danger surrounding this contention over the principles of the Open Door has been the chief alarm behind the arbitration and peace movement in America

and Europe, and its complications were the direct means of bringing forward the arbitration treaties signed between America and Great Britain, and America and France, August 3, 1911, furnishing as they did, the opportunity for Great Britain by signing the treaty to remedy the evils which the Anglo-Japanese alliance had wrought in the position of Anglo-Saxons in the Pacific, the effect being to unite the British colonies with the United States in the causes of the West, and by effacing herself from the list of America's possible enemies leave the United States free to promote the principles of the Open Door. The world of international affairs has thus laid down the lines of an Open Door Era, or conflict, with America in the breach, and with problems in the solution of which there are no guiding parallels.

America's geographical and political position is midway between the theatres of these two doctrines of the Americas and Eastern Asia. America is a strong, unbroken, untried, and powerful nation of vast ideas and intense purposes. For several reasons, therefore, she is the center of the international stage of the Pacific, and one of several unknown elements of vast potentiality there, of which China is another. She has done several things to deserve this position, and the chief reason why she is the power in the breach of these Pacific questions is, that, after acquiring the Philippines and her Pacific territories in 1898 she, in 1899, established the Open Door, equal opportunity, and integrity of China doctrine among the Powers, in 1900 sent an army to Peking in its interest, in 1908¹ a battleship fleet to Eastern Asia and around the world for this purpose, and the Japanese question, and began with striking energy to open the Isthmus of Panama to let her navy and all Atlantic commerce into the Pacific—a work worthy of China that built the great wall and the grand canal—and in 1910 and 1911, with surprising diplomacy in which she challenged all the great Powers, she forged for her finance, industry, government, and national ideals, a firm place in China's industrial and political development equal with the greatest nations. And last, if she so elects, she is the "god in the car" of the future of the Pacific because she is the largest and most powerful state in the Western Hemisphere

¹ The dispatch of a division of the American Army, composed of all arms of the service and fully equipped for a campaign, was one of the most extreme acts of executive authority in the history of the United States.—JOHN W. FOSTER, *Ex-Secretary of State*.

and in the Pacific. What she is to do is a subject in the determination of which every citizen may now take a permanent interest, and most have already discovered a relation, if not along political lines, at least with respect to the question as represented by the presence of Mongolians in America and of the word in the American federal laws.

When the word Mongolian was employed in the federal laws, none imagined that it was itself to be the emblem of foreign affairs of immense magnitude for a nation whose first President warned against foreign entanglements. Those entanglements were ours at the end of what I have called the Open Door Decade (1900-1910). The United States was involved with Eastern Asia and Europe on the west (Open Door), as she is involved with Europe on the east (Monroe Doctrine). And since the greatest questions exist there, foreign affairs in their widest sense have come from Eastern Asia. Even the constitution was made in an age of darkness respecting Eastern Asia; Confucius was merely a name; the statesmen, sages, builders, artists, writers, of China and of Japan were not then known, as they are nearly unknown to-day. Since that age Eastern Asia has written its own mandate across the European tradition respecting Asia, and across some of our federal laws, the latter circumstance involving one of the problems in the Pacific, and the enlightenment respecting Eastern Asia that has now begun both in Europe and in America may be written down in the words Open Door Doctrine better than in any other form.

The Pacific question to Americans is locked up in the affairs of three countries, Japan, China, and America. Western Asia gave religion to the world. If China is the key to "the world's politics of the next five centuries," as John Hay said it was, Eastern Asia has given grand politics to the world, and Eastern Asia is China and Japan.

Japan is now a first-class Power in the Western sense, having a highly organized government with a competent military, and she is steadily increasing in enlightenment, prosperity, strength and power.

China is the nation of greatest bulk in the world, is in a state of change and progress, possesses the sinews and has the visible prospects of being a first-class Power, and furnishes not only the most important example of effort at constitutional and representative government ever attempted, but the most important attempt at reform in the history of man.

These two nations and races are America's permanent associates in the "world's politics of the next five centuries." A study of the world's politics during the awakening of China shows that in times of crisis over China a majority of Western nations, influenced by the American disseminated doctrine of the Open Door have held back in Eastern Asia, generally willing to be led by America, and this opportunity and responsibility has been permanently accepted by America in the interest first of her present trade and future commerce and peace, and second in the interest of China and all the Powers equally. American financiers entered the field of China's industrial regeneration, 1909, and now the United States has physical interests there identical with those of the greatest Powers, thus giving adequate support to the position she has taken as the advocate of the Open Door.

The natural effect upon Japan of the active material interest policy adopted by the United States in Eastern Asia, and the setting up of the Open Door principles of equal opportunity and especially that of the integrity of China's sovereignty and territory, has been to introduce along with it the influences and principles of the Monroe Doctrine upon which Japan seized and has now made a part of her policy towards the world. The Monroe Doctrine for Eastern Asia means that Western Powers are not to expect to extend their sovereignty and institutions there. This policy upon the part of Japan would exactly suit this country if it were a certainty that Japan herself was not destined to extend her own authority on the continent of Asia and thus traverse the principles of the integrity of China and the equal rights of Western Powers. The fact is that to Japan American policy introduces the principles of no extension of Western authority in Eastern Asia, because it throws into such insistent relief those facts of Japan's position on the Asian continent and her political alliances and complications with Russia and European Powers that make her an opponent of the integrity of the Chinese Empire. It cannot be disputed that for several years now a diplomatic battle has been going on between Japan and America, until recently much to Japan's advantage, which has divided the Powers interested in Eastern Asia into two camps. The superior political and diplomatic sagacity of Japan in Eastern affairs enabled her to marshal the frontier powers of China into a frontier compact. These frontier powers, Great Britain and Japan,

France and Russia, are allied offensively and defensively, while France and Japan have agreed together respecting frontier interests, Great Britain and Russia have agreed together regarding frontier interests, and finally Russia and Japan themselves reached an agreement on Chinese frontier interests July 4, 1910, the main point of which agreement is the maintenance of the *status quo* in northern China. Needless to say the "*status quo*" of Russia and Japan in north China is something which China considers to be contrary to the Portsmouth Treaty, the Ching-Komura Convention, a violation not only of treaties but of the Open Door, the integrity of China's sovereignty, and of her territorial integrity.

But with respect to influencing the great Powers in their attitudes toward China, the American policy, upon the success of Japan in getting Russia to sign with her an agreement, was thus outmaneuvered at the end of the Open Door Decade. The political forces of the Powers in Eastern Asia were then marshaled by Japan upon the side of material frontier interests, and America saw that the Open Door was becoming more of a name than anything else. It was at this juncture that the government in Washington devised a plan for marshaling the financial and capitalistic interests of the Powers in China proper and in Manchuria, and centering those interests on the policy of industrial development, persuading China of the wisdom of a liberal use of foreign capital in the development of her empire. In this way the political interests of Japan and of Russia especially, were combatted, so as to offset the tendency to territorial and jurisdictional encroachment, and as both Russia's and Japan's weaknesses were found in their several incapacities to furnish capital to China and therefore to formidably oppose this movement, this plan succeeded, and America was able to see formed in China an alliance of the interests of the four capitalistic powers already mentioned on financial and commercial lines which stand in opposition to the political interests of the frontiers. It may be said, therefore, that the Open Door Doctrine already has led the United States to undertake unusual measures, and assume unprecedented responsibilities, in the promotion and perpetuation of it in Eastern Asia. Unless China is broken up by some unexpected though not wholly impossible cataclysm her future will largely depend upon the outcome of the struggle between these forces of the frontier (or Manchurian) allies whose interests and

political action tend to disintegrate China, and the capitalistic allies whose interests tend to build up China from the center outward, and if China could have peace within might conquer the evils she has allowed to form about her frontiers. America's course for several years now has served to fasten upon her the responsibility of maintaining a foremost place in this contest, and these latest activities of 1910-1911 only leave her on the threshold of yet greater possibilities and responsibilities. What these are may be imagined by those students of Eastern affairs whose knowledge of the forces working within the Chinese race and nation equals their understanding of the necessities, aims, opportunities, and intentions of the frontier powers. That, in fact, is the Open Door question.